

From: Seneca, Roy
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EPA Region III
Office of Public Affairs
Mid-Atlantic Headlines
Wednesday, August 14, 2013
*** DAILY HOT LIST ***

Pennsylvania Residents Ask EPA to Reopen Fracking Probe

BLOOMBERG NEWS SERVICE Pennsylvania residents petitioned the Environmental Protection Agency to reopen an investigation into water quality in Dimock, after publication of an internal agency analysis that linked gas drilling to methane leaks. Ray Kemble, who lives in the town, and Craig Stevens, who lives nearby, today delivered a petition they said was signed by 60,000 people to EPA employees in Washington. They carried a gallon of brown water they said came from a well used by Kemble. "Even though I don't like to call the federal government in, you guys are our last hope," Stevens told EPA staffers outside the agency's headquarters. "We need you to tell the truth about fracking." Dimock, the northeast Pennsylvania town featured in the film "Gasland," has become a symbol for opponents questioning the safety of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, in which water, sand and chemicals are shot underground to free gas trapped in shale deep underground. In 2010, state regulators said drilling by Cabot Oil & Gas Corp. near Dimock had contaminated local wells, a finding disputed by the company. The subsequent EPA investigation, concluded last year, found the water posed no health risks to town residents. In late July, environmentalists uncovered an unreleased power-point presentation by an EPA employee that said fracking caused methane to leak into drinking-water aquifers. The EPA said the findings in the presentation were preliminary and more study is needed. Cabot said water-well issues are the result of natural gas migration, not its drilling or fracking. Following publication of the internal report, the critics of the gas-production technique say the EPA needs to return to Dimock and reopen its probe into what has happened there. "We will review the petition," Alisha Johnson, an agency spokeswoman who met with Kemble and Stevens, said in an e-mail. Gas production in Pennsylvania surged in the past few years as companies expanded use of fracking. Drillers are finding natural gas in the Marcellus Shale, which is about 5,000 feet under Pennsylvania and separated by thick rock layers from the water aquifers, which are at most a few hundred feet beneath the surface.

Poll: 'Striking' support for Chesapeake Bay cleanup

NEWPORT NEWS DAILY PRESS As the November election approaches, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation released the results of a poll of Virginia voters Tuesday that show strong, broad support for a healthy bay and local waterways among those likely to cast ballots. In fact, pollsters say, the numbers show "striking" support from Virginians across all demographics even during a time of economic upheaval and political partisanship. "What's remarkable is that the numbers have been immune to seismic changes in politics nationally, and here in Virginia remained as strong as it was before," said Dave Metz, a partner at Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates, in a conference call with reporters. His firm is one of two that CBF commissioned to conduct the nonpartisan poll. "(Even with) the parties at each other's throats more often than not, there's remarkable consensus," said Metz. "And I think it's something that makes it unique." His firm along with Public Opinion Strategies queried voters about the relative importance of clean water and a restored bay and whether it was an economic priority, about the state's role in ensuring clean water, particularly through the bay cleanup plan, and whether the issue would influence their vote. Among the results, they found that 92 percent of voters polled support efforts to clean the bay and its tributaries, and 86 percent consider doing so a priority. Covering 64,000 square miles and spreading over six states and the District of Columbia, the watershed is the largest on the continent. But over decades of overfishing and pollution it deteriorated, until in 2010 the U.S. EPA required bay states to come up with detailed plans to reduce the amount of phosphorus, nitrogen and sediment entering the watershed. The goal is to have the bay 60 percent restored by 2017, and fully restored by 2025. According to Ann Jennings, CBF's Virginia executive director, her group has worked with the two firms in the past to gauge voter opinion over bay cleanup. The last poll was in 2010. This newest poll was conducted over several days last month, and out of 601 completed interviews found that:

Sunshine law gets cloudy when federal officials take email home

WASHINGTON TIMES Documents show that Lisa P. Jackson, as EPA chief, told a lobbyist to shift their conversations to her "home email" account rather than using official government accounts, in a move that appears to contravene the intent of federal sunshine laws. Meanwhile, top House investigators Tuesday accused Lois Lerner, the woman at the center of the investigation into the IRS targeting of conservative groups, of using her personal email account while doing agency business. In Ms. Lerner's case, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform said she sent draft documents from her official government account to a personal email address. In Ms. Jackson's case, the information, released as part of a Freedom of Information Act request, shows she told a vice president at Siemens AG, a multinational electronics corporation, to communicate with her on a private email account rather than at her EPA addresses. "P.S. Can you use my home email rather than this one when you need to contact me directly? Tx, Lisa," Ms. Jackson wrote in a December 2009 email to Siemens USA's vice president for sustainability, Alison Taylor, after the woman asked Ms. Jackson to schedule a meeting with a company executive. Ms. Jackson resigned as head of the Environmental Protection Agency late last year, just as questions about her use of emails were beginning to rise — particularly over whether she was using a secondary government address attached to the name "Richard Windsor" to avoid scrutiny. The 2009 email was part of hundreds of pages of documents the EPA turned over after open-records requests from Christopher C. Horner, a researcher and author of "The Liberal War on Transparency," a book that argues the Obama administration is avoiding sunshine laws that the president promised to uphold. "I have demonstrated widespread use by Obama officials of nonofficial email accounts to conduct official business, by people trained to know that this is improper," Mr. Horner said Tuesday. He thinks some administration officials are turning to private or secret accounts to try to avoid public scrutiny, which is against the law but difficult to police. "FOIA

works on an honor system, and those systems only work with people of honor. So you see the problem,” he said. The two most recent examples of potential private email use for government business came to light only because of the paper trail that showed up in other document requests. The EPA didn’t return messages seeking comment Tuesday, and Ms. Jackson didn’t respond to an email sent to her private address asking about her move to push her conversation with the Siemens employee to a private account

Climate change in NJ: State report details what's happened, what's coming

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRERHigher temperatures in both summer and winter. Different rainfall patterns. Sea level rise. More “extreme events” such as storms, floods and hot spells. On Monday, the New Jersey Sierra Club drew attention to a state climate change report updated and posted on the state website in June. Jeff Tittel, director of the environmental organization, suggested that since the state posted it without fanfare, officials were trying to hide it. Folks at the Department of Environmental Protection, whose scientists prepared the report, said that wasn’t so. So the political battle over climate change and whether Gov. Christie puts as much stock into it as he should continues. What’s most interesting to me is what the report actually says, and how it differs from a similar report completed in 2010. Right off the bat: The 2010 report cites “ever increasing carbon dioxide emissions to the atmosphere from human activity” as the cause for the warming of the Earth’s crust. By the 2013 report, it’s more complex — “a result of ever increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions from human activity, as well as natural climate variability.” The new report goes into precipitation trends more thoroughly, noting that “despite a trend toward more precipitation, the Northeast is seeing longer periods without rainfall and longer growing seasons. The result is a drier growing season, especially during the summer months ... “ The summer drying trend is “exacerbated by reduced recharge from spring during snowmelt,” the report notes. Bad new for agriculture, and I hope to look at this in a future story. If any New Jersey farmers or ag scientists want to give me their perspective, I’d welcome it. The report also notes — as did the 2010 report — that there’s been “a statistically significant rise in average statewide temperature” since 1895. Air-conditioning needs are rising, and heating needs are falling. Where the 2013 report takes a significant new tack is in its inclusion of Rutgers University estimates of sea level rise looking forward. Their “best estimate” is that by 2050, sea level will be 17 inches higher than it was in 2000. Their “low estimate” is that it will be just 13 inches higher, and their “high estimate” is that it will be 22 inches higher.

Cardin visits WSSC water plant

MARYLAND GAZETTE NEWSPAPERS On the heels of emergency water restrictions imposed in Prince George’s County this July because of a failing water main, U.S. Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin met Tuesday with the bi-county Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission to talk options for fixing the aging infrastructure. WSSC serves 1.8 million residents in Prince George’s and Montgomery counties. During a tour of the Patuxent Water Filtration Plant on Tuesday morning, Cardin (D) of Pikesville was briefed by WSSC CEO and General Manager Jerry N. Johnson on the agency’s plans to upgrade its water and sewer infrastructure and on its alternative energy programs, according to a WSSC news release. Cardin chairs the Senate’s Water and Wildlife subcommittee. More than one-fourth of WSSC’s 5,600 miles of water infrastructure is 50 years old or older, with most somewhere between 25 and 50 years old, spokesman Jim Neustadt said during a phone interview. This year, the agency will replace 51 miles of pipe, and will increase to eventually replace 55 miles each year, Neustadt said. WSSC also maintains 5,400 miles of sewer lines. Cardin said the aging infrastructure presents a clear and present danger to public health and security, according to a release from his office.While the federal government cannot meet the need alone, Cardin talked in detail about the Water Infrastructure Resiliency and Sustainability Act, scheduled for introduction in September, according to the release. The legislation would alleviate many of the problems facing Maryland and the nation

Pa. Residents Ask EPA to Reopen Study of Drilling, Well Contamination

BNA DAILY ENVIRONMENT REPORTPHILADELPHIA—Residents of northeastern Pennsylvania asked the Environmental Protection Agency Aug. 13 to reopen its investigation into whether drinking water wells in Dimock, Pa.; Pavillion, Wyo.; and Weatherford, Texas, were contaminated as a result of nearby natural gas drilling. Dimock residents delivered to EPA headquarters in Washington, D.C., some 50,000 petitions submitted online by people who maintain the agency shut down each of those investigations prematurely under pressure from the oil and gas industry.The petition drive was spearheaded by Food & Water Watch, a national consumer advocacy group, following the July 27 disclosure by the Los Angeles Times of an internal report by an EPA investigator who concluded that gas drilling caused methane to leak into domestic water wells in Dimock . The investigator also concluded that methane and other gases released during drilling “apparently cause significant damage to the water quality,” which may persist for less than a year or may linger long-term, for more than three years, in some cases.That conclusion contradicts EPA’s July 2012 finding that contaminant levels in 64 Dimock-area water wells that were tested did not pose a public health threat or require additional action by the agency. The internal report, a PowerPoint presentation by an investigator from EPA’s Region 3 office, “shows there was dissension within EPA as to what’s fit to drink,” Sam Bernhardt, Pennsylvania organizer for Food & Water Watch, told BNA Aug. 13. Bernhardt said the decision to close the investigation was a judgment call by EPA headquarters staff, which overruled the regional office. He said the petitioners believe a renewed study that takes into account all the data collected by EPA and the state Department of Environmental Protection along with the findings of scientific studies by various academic groups will conclude that Dimock’s drinking water is contaminated. EPA’s regional and national offices did not respond to requests for comment. Cabot Oil and Gas Corp., which has done much of the drilling near Dimock, maintains that water quality problems in some of the wells can be traced to poor well construction that has allowed naturally occurring contaminants to leach into drinking water. “The drinking water in Dimock, Pa., has been thoroughly and repeatedly tested over the past several years,” the company said in a statement. “The Environmental Protection Agency, state authorities, and third-party experts have all tested the water, and all have found no evidence of contamination related to shale development.”

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Climate change in NJ: State report details what's happened, what's comingHigher temperatures in both summer and winter. Different rainfall patterns. Sea level rise. More “extreme events” such as storms, floods and hot spells. On Monday, the New Jersey Sierra Club drew attention to a state climate change report updated and posted on the state website in June. Jeff Tittel, director of the environmental organization, suggested that since the state posted it without fanfare, officials were trying to hide it. Folks at the Department of Environmental Protection, whose scientists prepared the report, said that wasn’t so. So the political battle over climate change and whether Gov. Christie puts as much stock into it as he should continues. What’s most interesting to me is what the report actually says, and how it differs from a similar report completed in 2010. Right off the bat: The 2010 report cites “ever increasing carbon dioxide emissions to the atmosphere from human activity” as the cause for the warming of the Earth’s crust. By the 2013 report, it’s more complex — “a result of ever increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions from human activity, as well as natural climate variability.” The new report goes into precipitation trends more thoroughly, noting that “despite a trend toward more precipitation, the Northeast is seeing longer periods without rainfall and longer growing seasons. The result is a drier growing season, especially during the summer months ... “ The summer drying trend is “exacerbated by reduced recharge from spring during snowmelt,” the report notes. Bad new for agriculture, and I hope to look at this in a future story. If any New Jersey farmers or ag scientists want to give me their perspective, I’d welcome it. The report also notes — as did the 2010 report — that there’s been “a statistically significant rise in average statewide temperature” since 1895. Air-conditioning needs are rising, and heating needs are falling. Where the 2013 report takes a significant new tack is in its inclusion of Rutgers University estimates of sea level rise looking forward. Their “best estimate” is that by 2050, sea level will be 17 inches higher than it was in 2000. Their “low estimate” is that it will be just 13 inches higher, and their “high estimate” is that it will be 22 inches higher.

[Saving the nation's green giants: Tall, lush trees](#) (Sunday) Walking under his giant white oak tree on his Washington County farm, Paul Karpan appears calm, even meditative, with spirits high. In his 90 years, he's spent many inspired hours with the green monster. "This is a landmark on this farm -- something you can kind of be proud of," he said. The mighty oak, which likely took root in the nation's earliest decades, provided shade for his beef cows, a site for picnics and a target for a few bolts of lightning, all while serving as an environmental steward of his 51-year-old Blaine Township farm. Hug this tree and your arms barely bend. Mr. Karpan keeps an eye on the old oak to assure it's still standing because he knows that "every big tree has to die off." Majestic giants like the white oak are Earth's largest organisms and among its oldest. They pierce the sky with circus-tent canopies. They filter air, water and soil, and science now tells us they rule the ecosystem to the benefit of virtually every creature and organism, including humans. But over the past three centuries, old-growth trees were chopped down for fuel, farming, development or lumber. Scientists now are realizing the consequences. Champion native trees, with their good genes and long lives that have spanned centuries, could play a role significantly more important than serving as modern spectacles of nature.

[Letter: Regulations hurt coal and consumers alike](#) The Post-Gazette's Aug. 6 coal editorial ("Coal Barons: GOP Lawmakers Try to Turn Back the Hands of Time") is out of touch with today's coal mining industry and is ready to let consumers bear the brunt of the off-base suggestion that America abandon an industry that remains the largest single source of electricity and one that is highly affordable and readily available. In Pennsylvania alone -- as in the nation -- 40 percent of the state's electricity is provided by coal power plants; the industry generates 73,000 high-wage jobs and adds \$8 billion to the state treasury. Also, states that rely predominantly on coal as their source of electricity generation have lower rates and, not coincidentally, the highest concentrations of manufacturing -- further bolstering those states' economies. The reason congressmen Tim Murphy, Bill Shuster and Keith Rothfus support the Energy Consumers Relief Act is because the administration has gone too fast and too far with stringent greenhouse gas regulations that would ban even the most technologically-advanced coal power plants -- facilities that emit 90 percent fewer emissions than the typical plants they replace. These standards would place a regressive tax on families with half of all Americans already paying 21 percent of their disposable income on energy.

[Feds told to stop stalling on nuclear waste decision](#) WASHINGTON -- A top federal appeals court on Tuesday ordered the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to end the suspense and come to a decision on the controversial Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository. In a 2-1 decision that raises the political stakes, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit determined that the commission has "continued to violate the law" by refusing to act, one way or another, on the Yucca Mountain licensing application. The time for a decision, the court said, "has long since passed." Judge Brett Kavanaugh, writing for the majority, added, "The commission is simply flouting the law." The Nuclear Waste Policy Act gives the Nuclear Regulatory Commission three years to accept or reject a license application for a nuclear waste storage site once it has been filed. The Bush administration submitted the Yucca Mountain application in June 2008.

[Pittsburgh Tribune Review](#)
[Armstrong School District will lease gas rights at 2 schools](#)The Armstrong School District plans to lease its oil and gas rights at Lenape Elementary School in Manor Township to two drilling companies. The school board approved a two-year lease with Kittanning-based Snyder Brothers, Inc., and Kittanning-based MDS Energy to drill for Marcellus shale gas on a 49.36-acre parcel at Lenape Elementary School, and a 43.51-acre parcel at Lenape Technical School. The board approved the lease in an 8-0 vote. Board member D. Royce Smeltzer was absent. The two companies plan to join forces, in hopes of maximizing production on the district's land, according to board President Joseph Close. “These are small leases that are identical, and everything will be shared equally,” Close said. “This could be a good source of revenue for our district.” Close said he was unsure of how much gas the two companies would obtain from the site, but all profits will be split between the companies and district. The companies will begin applying for permits through the state Department of Environmental Protection within the next couple of weeks, but construction and drilling may not begin untilnext summer, Close said.

[Cement company files lawsuit to stop gas pipeline on its Lawrence County property](#)A Northampton County cement company on Tuesday filed a federal lawsuit in Pittsburgh to stop a natural gas pipeline from running through its Lawrence County property. Essroc Cement Corp. of Nazareth said in the lawsuit that the 20-inch pipeline would keep it from extracting tens of millions of dollars worth of coal and limestone from land it owns around its cement plant in North Beaver. NiSource Inc. of Merrillville, Ind., announced in July 2012 that it was forming a joint venture with Hilcorp Energy Co. of Houston to build a 50-mile pipeline that would gather gas from Utica Shale wells in Western Pennsylvania and Northeastern Ohio and deliver it to a natural gas liquids processing facility in Ohio. Lawyers for Essroc couldn't immediately be reached for comment. A NiSource spokesman had no immediate comment. Essroc owns 1,700 acres around the cement plant and has exclusive subsurface rights to more than 2,000 acres of adjoining or nearby property, the lawsuit says. The company is trying to sell the plant and property, the lawsuit says. NiSource has filed rights-of-way agreements for the pipeline with surface owners on six parcels where Essroc owns subsurface rights, the lawsuit says.

[Sewer overflow plan falls short](#) The Connellsville Municipal Authority received a letter from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection several weeks ago, indicating that the authority's combined sewer overflow plan is not in compliance with provisions of the Clean Water Act. Paul Eiswerth, environmental engineer III with DEP, said the authority's combined sewer overflow (CSO) long-term control plan is not acceptable even though the authority revised the plan. As a result, DEP officials will meet with authority members within the next few weeks to make additional revisions to the plan. In its revised long-term control plan, Eiswerth said, the Connellsville Municipal Authority is proposing that it is in compliance with the second of the third approach options. The authority indicated there is an adequate level of control to meet with water quality based on requirements of the Clean Water Act. However, DEP officials do not agree with the authority's claim. Eiswerth said the authority has the right to appeal the DEP decision within the next 30 days. “The DEP inspected the plant on July 19 to review the problem,” said authority vice chairman Pat Duncan. “DEP sent us a letter about the combined sewer overflow problem. DEP visited us a few years back, asking us to revise our combined sewer overflow control plan.”

[STATE IMPACT PENNSYLVANIA](#)
[Environmentalists Lead Push for EPA to Reopen Dimock Water Study](#) Environmentalists from Pennsylvania will arrive in Washington, D.C. today with some 50,000 petitions calling for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to reopen a high-profile water contamination study. The petitions, circulated online by Food and Water Watch and other environmental groups, come just two weeks after the Los Angeles Times reported that regional officials with the EPA in Philadelphia did not agree with the national office on its decision to close an investigation into water contamination in Dimock, Pa. Environmental activists stopped by the mid-Atlantic office in Philadelphia Monday afternoon to drum up support. In the middle, sporting silver aviator sunglasses, was Ray Kemble, one of several residents from Dimock who say nearby natural gas extraction has contaminated their drinking water supplies. Kemble has become a key figure in the fight against fracking in the Susquehanna County village. Holding up a gallon jug of brown water taken from his well last December, Kemble said it's even worse now. "The smell is horrendous coming off the well. It's so bad, it'll start burning your nose, back of your throat. You'll start gagging." The EPA study found hazardous levels of barium, arsenic or manganese in the water supplies of five households. But the agency said the toxins could be reduced to safe levels with treatment. Last July, the EPA [announced it had completed its investigation and that water in Dimock was safe to drink](#). An undated internal PowerPoint leaked to the Los Angeles Times shows at least one official at the mid-Atlantic office in Philadelphia linked contaminants found in the tested water to gas drilling. ...“I’ve gotten it from people off the record and I’m not going to say who they are, but we’re standing in front of the building, it’s coming from higher up,” Dimock resident Ray Kemble said. “It’s above their pay grade.” Kemble is hopeful this new information about the EPA's process in Dimock will move federal officials to take a new look at all contamination complaints in shale regions across the U.S.

[ALLENTOWN MORNING CALL](#)
[Lehigh Gas gets state natural gas grant](#) Allentown-based Lehigh Gas Partners has been awarded a \$391,445 state energy grant to purchase new or convert existing heavy vehicles to use compressed natural gas fuel. The grant was announced Monday by the Department of Environmental Protection. Lehigh Gas will work with Philadelphia Gas Works, United Parcel Service and AAA Mid-Atlantic on the project, in which Lehigh Gas will open a publicly accessible compressed natural gas

station on West Oregon Ave. in South Philadelphia. The grant will allow eight new natural gas vehicles to be put on the road. Lehigh Gas missed out on the grant when it applied to the state earlier this year. But one of the companies that was awarded a grant — Crossett Inc. of Warren, Pa.— declined its award, making money available for Lehigh Gas and one other applicant, McAneny Brothers Inc. of Cambria County.

CLEARFIELD PROGRESS

Comment period reopens for proposed well DUBOIS - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III is reopening the public comment period on the issuance of an underground injection control permit to Windfall Oil & Gas, Inc. for a proposed disposal injection well along Highland Street Extension in Brady Township. At yesterday's DuBois City Council meeting, Highland St. resident Darlene Marshall asked council to provide any material it had to EPA during the reopened comment period. EPA is requesting public comment on its findings that the injection well is unlikely to pose a risk of induced seismicity and that earthquakes don't pose a risk to its construction and operation. A supplemental statement on the findings may be found at http://www.epa.gov/reg3wapd/public_notices.htm#windfall. It's also available for review at DuBois Public Library and the EPA's Philadelphia office of water and source water protection during normal business hours. According to information provided by Marshall, public comments on the specified issues should be mailed to the attention of S. Stephen Platt at EPA Region III, Ground Water & Enforcement Branch (3WP22), Office of Drinking Water and Source Water Protection, 1650 Arch St., Philadelphia, PA, 19103 prior to Sept. 11. EPA's Region III office originally issued a public notice requesting public comment on the proposed issuance of the permit on Nov. 7, 2012. The initial comment period expired Dec. 31, 2012.

HARRISBURG PATRIOT-NEWS

Bald eagles moving toward delisting from Pennsylvania's list of endangered and threatened species Bald eagles may be completely removed from Pennsylvania's list of endangered and threatened species by early next year. Pennsylvania Game Commission biologists plan to propose at the September meeting of game commissioners that the species be upgraded from threatened, which would remove the birds from the state's list, Doug Gross, supervisor of the commission's Endangered and Nongame Birds Section, said at the commissioners' working group meeting on Monday. "We have met our delisting criteria," he explained. "Bald eagles no longer meet that definition (of a threatened species under Pennsylvania law) and they haven't met that definition for several years." The criteria for delisting in the commission's 2010-19 bald eagle management plan include having 150 active nests for five years, successful pairs in at least 40 counties, more than 60 percent nesting success and production of 1.2 eaglets per successful nest. In its annual Independence Day announcement of the number of active bald eagle nests in the state, the commission this year noted at least 252 nests, the first time the annual estimate has topped 250. The birds now nest in at least 56 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. Those numbers reflected the latest highpoint in a decades-long upward trend from the early 1980s, when only three active nests were known in Pennsylvania, all in the Pymatuning-Conneaut Marsh in Crawford County. The bald eagle, formerly a resident of all the major water ways across Pennsylvania and many lakes in the Poconos, had disappeared from all other parts of the state between World War II and the 1960s, a victim of organochlorine pesticides like DDT and polluted waterways.

The high-stakes numbers game of obtaining a LEED environmental certification for your home: Building green Saying you are building a green home is one thing. Actually doing and documenting it -- all by the numbers and according to the detailed rules, requirements and checklists of LEED -- is quite another, indeed. This latter, harder and much more expensive route is the light-footprint path that Jens and Donna Damgaard chose to take in building River Lodge along the Susquehanna River in Middle Paxton Twp. "People say, 'I'm going to do it green'," Jens says. "But what does that mean? To do it in a totally true sense, it's everything. There is a checklist, and if you follow it, then you have a house that is green." This connect-the-green-dots checklist in the LEED for Homes building process and guidelines, which the Damgaards followed to the letter. LEED -- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design -- is an international program of the U.S. Green Building Council designed to promote sustainable building practices. LEED programs for various types of commercial and public buildings have been popular for several years. But residential green building represented the final frontier.

READING EAGLE

More tests planned at Glen Oley Farmshe Exeter Township supervisors voted 3-1 Monday to remove Glen Oley Farms from the Act 537 state sewage plan it must file later this year. Gary E. Lloyd, Dona L. Starr and Chairman Donald R. Wilson also voted to pay Berks Enviro Tech Inc. \$21,444 for more testing of the development's on-lot septic systems and wells. Kenneth A. Smith voted no. He said the Glen Oley residents should pay for the testing and not put the burden on all taxpayers. The actions could mean a reprieve for residents of the 63 developed properties in phases one and two of the development. Township officials had previously warned that including the development in the Act 537 plan would likely lead to the state requiring sewers to be installed. The problem was a 2010 study that looked at 23 properties. It found that 13 percent had malfunctioning septic systems and 56.5 percent of the wells did not meet state drinking water standards. However, the study found no fecal coliform bacteria in any of the water samples. That left some residents to question if there was a problem and whether mandatory sewer hookups were the solution. At a meeting last month, David R. Beane, a Reading environmental attorney who represents 48 property owners, told the supervisors: "Many of the residents have not yet made up their minds. They are genuinely concerned about allegations of public health and safety threats to homeowners in Glen Oley Farms."

WNEP-TV SCRANTON

Mountain Top Contamination Cleanup Complete WRIGHT TOWNSHIP — Nearly two decades and \$ 1 million later, state officials say contamination from an old gas station in Luzerne County is finally cleaned up. Department of Environmental Protection officials say more than 1,000 tons of contaminated soil and groundwater had to be trucked out of the Mountain Top area. The project took nearly twice as long as it should have because crews discovered leaking gasoline tanks underground that were never reported to the state. It may just look like a grassy, gravel lot but DEP officials call the property along Albert Corners in the Mountain Top area a success story. DEP officials believe a developer from England purchased the property in the 1980s not knowing it used to be a gas station on South Main Street in Wright Township. Photos show contractors using heavy equipment to remove the abandoned underground tanks that had been leaking gasoline and diesel fuel for years. "For some reason, every time we would use the oxygenation, it just wouldn't give us the result we were looking for. A further dig discovered three more additional tanks in 2004," DEP official Colleen Connolly explained.

SHIPPENSBURG NEWS CHRONICLE

Newville farm receives Chesapeake Bay Clean Water Farm Award HARRISBURG – The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts Inc. (PACD) awarded the operators of three farms in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed the Clean Water Farm Award Monday, July 15. Weary's Dairy, in Newville, received the award along with farms in Sullivan and Blair counties. "These three farming families are being honored today for going above and beyond what is required of them by law to reduce pollution and improve water quality," said PACD President Jack Tressler. "Farmers are taking proactive steps to ensure there is enough clean water for future generations. By protecting their local waterways, they are protecting the Chesapeake Bay." Award recipients are:
* Weary's Dairy, in Newville, is operated by Boyd, Brian, and Brandon Weary. They have 375 cows, heifers and calves and 400 acres of cropland. The farm has a long history of implementing conservation practices to protect the nearby Conodoguinet Creek. Weary's conservation practices include a large animal mortality composter, cover crops, and seven years of continuous no-till which has increased residue on cropfields to improve soil health. The combination of all these practices helps the Weary's manage the farm in a way that reduces runoff of nutrients and sediment.
* The D&D Hottenstein Fam, in New Albany, Sullivan County, is owned and operated by brothers, Dennis and David Hottenstein and managed by Wess Hottenstein. The beef and dairy farm includes 500 acres of cropland.
* Burket Falls Farm in East Freedom, Blair County, includes approximately 300 acres of ground for crop production and 98 acres of pasture. The dairy operation houses 120 adult dairy cows and 150 heifers and calves. The Burkets are known worldwide for their fine genetics of Polled Holstein Cows.
For more information, visit www.pacd.org.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

A Petworth homeowner's green roof one year later Last year I installed a green roof (a roof with soil and plants) over my front porch and wrote about the process in the Where We Live blog of The Washington Post. I was excited about installing a green roof but also had some concerns, as did some of the commenters to the blog. So, one year later, here is an update on how it is faring: It is freakin' beautiful, and I am very happy with it. Because it has been a wet summer, I haven't had to water it in the last 11 months. Every one to two weeks I pull up about five to 10 little weeds, but there are fewer each week. It's been entirely worth it. To review, last year my front porch leaked, and I needed a new roof. Because my bedroom windows look directly onto the roof's asphalt shingles, I started thinking about a green roof/garden, which has a number of environmental benefits such as insulation, stormwater control, pollution retention, reducing the heat island effect and more (see [previous posts](#)).

WASHINGTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

11 D.C.-area organizations make EPA's Green Power list The Washington area could teach Kermit a thing or two about the ease of being green. Eleven Washington-area organizations found a place on a [list of the top 50 users of green power](#), accounting for more than 20 percent of the ranking compiled by the Environmental Protection Agency. The U.S. Department of Energy ranked 6th — highest among Washington-area organizations — with 698 million kilowatt hours of annual green power used. Intel Corp., for the fifth year in a row, ranked first, with usage of 3.1 billion kilowatt hours annually. Check out the slideshow to the right for all of the Washington-area organizations that made EPA's list.

WAMU-RADIO (NPR)

Virginia Voters Back Chesapeake Bay Restoration Plan The Chesapeake Bay Foundation has released the results of a poll showing strong support for clean-up efforts and little desire for delay. With the governor's race in full swing, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation decided to survey likely Virginia voters to see what they want from candidates. Two pollsters who work for Republicans and Democrats questioned more than 600 people and found more than 90 percent support the Commonwealth's plan to restore the Chesapeake Bay. Eighty-six percent say it should be a priority. Voters also believe that restoration of the Bay will have significant economic benefits for the state. Forty-eight percent think it will create jobs, while 15 percent suppose it will hurt employment. Just 22 percent of those surveyed would support a candidate who wants to delay bay clean up to focus on other issues like the economy.

WASHINGTON TIMES

Sunshine law gets cloudy when federal officials take email home Documents show that Lisa P. Jackson, as EPA chief, told a lobbyist to shift their conversations to her "home email" account rather than using official government accounts, in a move that appears to contravene the intent of federal sunshine laws. Meanwhile, top House investigators Tuesday accused Lois Lerner, the woman at the center of the investigation into the IRS targeting of conservative groups, of using her personal email account while doing agency business. In Ms. Lerner's case, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform said she sent draft documents from her official government account to a personal email address. In Ms. Jackson's case, the information, released as part of a Freedom of Information Act request, shows she told a vice president at Siemens AG, a multinational electronics corporation, to communicate with her on a private email account rather than at her EPA addresses. "P.S. Can you use my home email rather than this one when you need to contact me directly? Tx, Lisa," Ms. Jackson wrote in a December 2009 email to Siemens USA's vice president for sustainability, Alison Taylor, after the woman asked Ms. Jackson to schedule a meeting with a company executive. Ms. Jackson resigned as head of the Environmental Protection Agency late last year, just as questions about her use of emails were beginning to rise — particularly over whether she was using a secondary government address attached to the name "Richard Windsor" to avoid scrutiny. The 2009 email was part of hundreds of pages of documents the EPA turned over after open-records requests from Christopher C. Horner, a researcher and author of "The Liberal War on Transparency," a book that argues the Obama administration is avoiding sunshine laws that the president promised to uphold. "I have demonstrated widespread use by Obama officials of nonofficial email accounts to conduct official business, by people trained to know that this is improper," Mr. Horner said Tuesday. He thinks some administration officials are turning to private or secret accounts to try to avoid public scrutiny, which is against the law but difficult to police. "FOIA works on an honor system, and those systems only work with people of honor. So you see the problem," he said. The two most recent examples of potential private email use for government business came to light only because of the paper trail that showed up in other document requests. The EPA didn't return messages seeking comment Tuesday, and Ms. Jackson didn't respond to an email sent to her private address asking about her move to push her conversation with the Siemens employee to a private account.

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON DAILY MAIL

Ron Walters Jr. joins crowded GOP race for Congress POCA -- It's common for politicians in West Virginia to decry regulations created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, disavow a so-called "war on coal" and pledge a renewed focus on job creation. Republican Ron Walters Jr. hit all three Tuesday at a rainy announcement ceremony kicking off his campaign for the second district seat. The 29-year-old first-time candidate said his small business experience helps him stand apart from other GOP candidates in the race."I think my background as a small business operator ... I have a lot of background working on a budget, working together with people, and I hope to bring that to Washington to break the partisan gridlocks and political posturing that's been going on for years, stifling small business owners..." Walters said Tuesday morning.

WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC RADIO

Who is working to preserve coal history? An agency is looking to recognize individuals who worked to preserve coal history this past year by calling for nominations. The Coal Heritage Highway Authority along with the National Coal Heritage Area Authority are looking to honor individuals, communities or organizations for projects that worked to preserve, promote, and interpret the rich coal heritage of southern West Virginia. The Projects must have taken place within the National Coal Heritage Area which includes Mercer, McDowell, Raleigh, Summers, Wyoming, Fayette, Boone, Logan, Mingo, Wayne, Lincoln, and Cabell Counties. The area also reached to the Paint Creek and Cabin Creek watersheds in Kanawha County. The groups are accepting nominations for six awards which include:

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

Housing agency pays \$6.8 million to lead paint victims Federal funds to help poor pay rent tapped for outstanding judgments. Using funds meant to help poor families find affordable places to live, Baltimore's public housing agency has paid nearly \$6.8 million in long-standing court judgments for lead poisoning suffered by six former residents when they were young children.

44,000 gallons of sewage overflows near Goucher College Root blocking sewer pipe cause spill. More than 44,000 gallons of sewage spilled near Goucher College in Towson before crews stopped the overflow Monday, Baltimore County public works officials say. Public works officials received a report of sewage odors in the area Aug. 5, and crews tracked the source to a grassy area northwest of the Dulaney Valley and Southerly roads intersection. A root blocking a sewer pipe had caused the overflow, and was cleared Monday afternoon, officials said. The sewage flowed into a grassy area east of Dulaney Valley Road and into Long Quarter Branch. County health officials said they would monitor water quality there and post advisories on the health department's website if necessary.

Balto. Co. may review backyard chicken regulations Some want county to ease zoning rules so more can keep chickens. Some Baltimore County officials want to consider whether to allow more residents to keep chickens in their yards, making the county the latest local government in Maryland to examine a national coop craze.

CARROLL COUNTY TIMES

Manchester tables possible solar farm MANCHESTER -- After two years of debate, the town of Manchester has tabled a possible solar farm on town property.

MARYLAND GAZETTE NEWSPAPERS

Cardin visits WSSC water plant On the heels of emergency water restrictions imposed in Prince George's County this July because of a failing water main, U.S. Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin met Tuesday with the bi-county Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission to talk options for fixing the aging infrastructure. WSSC serves 1.8 million residents in Prince George's and Montgomery counties. During a tour of the Patuxent Water Filtration Plant on Tuesday morning, Cardin (D) of Pikesville was briefed by WSSC CEO and General Manager Jerry N. Johnson on the agency's plans to upgrade its water and sewer infrastructure and on its alternative energy programs, according to a WSSC news release. Cardin chairs the Senate's Water and Wildlife subcommittee. More than one-fourth of WSSC's 5,600 miles of water infrastructure is 50 years old or older, with most somewhere between 25 and 50 years old, spokesman Jim Neustadt said during a phone interview. This year, the agency will replace 51 miles of pipe, and will increase to eventually replace 55 miles each year, Neustadt said. WSSC also maintains 5,400 miles of sewer lines. Cardin said the aging infrastructure presents a clear and present danger to public health and security, according to a release from his office.While the federal government cannot meet the need alone, Cardin talked in detail about the Water Infrastructure Resiliency and Sustainability Act, scheduled for introduction in September, according to the release. The legislation would alleviate many of the problems facing Maryland and the nation

VIRGINIA

NEWPORT NEWS DAILY PRESS

Poll: 'Striking' support for Chesapeake Bay cleanup As the November election approaches, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation released the results of a poll of Virginia voters Tuesday that show strong, broad support for a healthy bay and local waterways among those likely to cast ballots. In fact, pollsters say, the numbers show "striking" support from Virginians across all demographics even during a time of economic upheaval and political partisanship. "What's remarkable is that the numbers have been immune to seismic changes in politics nationally, and here in Virginia remained as strong as it was before," said Dave Metz, a partner at Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates, in a conference call with reporters. His firm is one of two that CBF commissioned to conduct the nonpartisan poll. "(Even with) the parties at each other's throats more often than not, there's remarkable consensus," said Metz. "And I think it's something that makes it unique." His firm along with Public Opinion Strategies queried voters about the relative importance of clean water and a restored bay and whether it was an economic priority, about the state's role in ensuring clean water, particularly through the bay cleanup plan, and whether the issue would influence their vote. Among the results, they found that 92 percent of voters polled support efforts to clean the bay and its tributaries, and 86 percent consider doing so a priority. Covering 64,000 square miles and spreading over six states and the District of Columbia, the watershed is the largest on the continent. But over decades of overfishing and pollution it deteriorated, until in 2010 the U.S. EPA required bay states to come up with detailed plans to reduce the amount of phosphorus, nitrogen and sediment entering the watershed. The goal is to have the bay 60 percent restored by 2017, and fully restored by 2025. According to Ann Jennings, CBF's Virginia executive director, her group has worked with the two firms in the past to gauge voter opinion over bay cleanup. The last poll was in 2010. This newest poll was conducted over several days last month, and out of 601 completed interviews found that:

WHSV-TV HARRISONBURG

DEQ Monitors Local Rivers, Implements Clean Up Plans AUGUSTA COUNTY, Va. -- Supervisors in Augusta County are looking into a monitoring program that deals with the Chesapeake Bay. It is tabled until further discussion, and if it is adopted it would be through the USGS. There are diferent ways to monitor what's in a river, including quality of aquatic life. The Department of Environmental Quality has a system in place that monitors water in Augusta County and other parts of the Commonwealth. The Department of Environmental Quality works with the state and with the Environmental Protection Agency separately for the Chesapeake Bay clean up plans. Workers measure more than 12 stations on the Middle and South Rivers. They also make sure local water is safe for people to swim in and for aquatic life. DEQ has been doing this for more than a decade. When they're measuring they're looking for sediments and nutrients, which include Nitrogen and Phosperous. Based on data at two stations at the mouths of the rivers, bacteria levels are decreasing. Tara Sieber with the DEQ said the risk to human health is about eight in 1000. Those numbers mean that if 1,000 people played in the water, only eight would reisk getting sick. "Bacteria are a human health concern, it's a risk for people getting sick. That indicates that there's fecal matter in the stream. And that's not something that we want. We want Virginia's waterways to be safe, healthy places to play," said Sieber. DEQ works closely with counties, including Augusta County. Meanwhile, the monitoring system that Augusta County has discussed would measure PH every 15 minutes. The DEQ implemented clean up plans in 2009. Here is a look at the South River plan. The plan for the Middle River is located here. Changes include reducing agricultural run-off. and direct deposit of manure in streams by livestock to cut down on bacteria. Sieber said most of the streams are returning to a healthy state.

CHARLOTTENVILLE DAILY PROGRESS

Course on Chesapeake Bay stewardship to be held locally The Chesapeake Bay Foundation will host an eight-week course on bay stewardship and water quality in Charlottesville. The course, Volunteers as Chesapeake Stewards, begins Oct. 1 and runs through Nov. 19. The classes will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Elks Lodge at 389 Elks Drive. Topics include the history of the bay, restoration efforts, advocacy and bay-friendly landscaping. Participants will take two field trips and will have to perform 40 hours of bay-related community service. The enrollment fee is \$30 for individuals and \$50 for couples. Applications are due Sept. 13. For more information, contact Robert Jennings at (484) 888-2966 or rjennings@cbf.org.

FREDERICKSBURG FREELANCE STAR

Waste-to-energy proposal in Stafford County sent back to square one It's back to square one for the waste-to-energy facility that was in the works for the regional landfill in Stafford County. The Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to rescind

its June 4 vote allowing a lease with Energy Extraction Partners LLC, just one of the many approvals the company would have needed to build on 11 acres at the Rappahannock Regional Landfill. The Tuesday decision comes after growing concerns from residents and some board members over a lack of information about what would have been a \$73 million privately funded facility. EEP had proposed using a process called pyrolysis—which involves heating trash at high temperatures without oxygen—to convert waste and imported tires into 15 megawatts of electricity, along with other byproducts like ash and tar. The R–Board, the six-member Fredericksburg and Stafford governing body that runs the landfill on Eskimo Hill Road, selected EEP from among three waste-to-energy proposals in November. Now, the R-Board could take a look at other proposals. It may also choose to stick with EEP’s plan, contingent on an independent environmental assessment to be paid for by the company. That choice remains up to the R–Board, according to the vote by Stafford supervisors. “We need to know the full range of what’s taking place,” said supervisor Cord Sterling, who motioned to rescind the previous vote, take up an environmental assessment, and give the supervisors final say over any future lease with EEP or another company. EEP had proposed building a 120,000-square-foot facility and paying the county \$100,000 a year to lease the land plus a \$1 million advance. The due date for that payment has been pushed back twice.

MISCELLANEOUS

BNA DAILY ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Pa. Residents Ask EPA to Reopen Study of Drilling, Well Contamination PHILADELPHIA—Residents of northeastern Pennsylvania asked the Environmental Protection Agency Aug. 13 to reopen its investigation into whether drinking water wells in Dimock, Pa.; Pavillion, Wyo.; and Weatherford, Texas, were contaminated as a result of nearby natural gas drilling. Dimock residents delivered to EPA headquarters in Washington, D.C., some 50,000 petitions submitted online by people who maintain the agency shut down each of those investigations prematurely under pressure from the oil and gas industry.The petition drive was spearheaded by Food & Water Watch, a national consumer advocacy group, following the July 27 disclosure by the Los Angeles Times of an internal report by an EPA investigator who concluded that gas drilling caused methane to leak into domestic water wells in Dimock . The investigator also concluded that methane and other gases released during drilling “apparently cause significant damage to the water quality,” which may persist for less than a year or may linger long-term, for more than three years, in some cases.That conclusion contradicts EPA’s July 2012 finding that contaminant levels in 64 Dimock-area water wells that were tested did not pose a public health threat or require additional action by the agency. The internal report, a PowerPoint presentation by an investigator from EPA’s Region 3 office, “shows there was dissension within EPA as to what’s fit to drink,” Sam Bernhardt, Pennsylvania organizer for Food & Water Watch, told BNA Aug. 13. Bernhardt said the decision to close the investigation was a judgment call by EPA headquarters staff, which overruled the regional office. He said the petitioners believe a renewed study that takes into account all the data collected by EPA and the state Department of Environmental Protection along with the findings of scientific studies by various academic groups will conclude that Dimock’s drinking water is contaminated. EPA’s regional and national offices did not respond to requests for comment. Cabot Oil and Gas Corp., which has done much of the drilling near Dimock, maintains that water quality problems in some of the wells can be traced to poor well construction that has allowed naturally occurring contaminants to leach into drinking water. “The drinking water in Dimock, Pa., has been thoroughly and repeatedly tested over the past several years,” the company said in a statement. “The Environmental Protection Agency, state authorities, and third-party experts have all tested the water, and all have found no evidence of contamination related to shale development.”

Perciasepe: Federal-State Partnership Needed on Greenhouse Gases EPA Deputy Administrator Perciasepe tells state legislators that state and federal leaders need to build on past successes as they pursue reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, which is high on the Obama administration’s agenda. “[W]e’ve done an amazing amount of work in this country to reduce pollution, and we’ve done it in a way that really has worked well with the economy,” he tells the 2013 Legislative Summit of the National Conference of State Legislatures, saying the same is needed “as we move into the realm of greenhouse gases.”

Petroleum Industry Asks EPA to Reduce 2014 Renewable Fuel Requirement The petroleum industry petitions EPA to cap the amount of ethanol that must be blended into the nation’s gasoline supply at less than 10 percent of the fuel supply in 2014. The American Petroleum Institute and the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers ask the agency to use its waiver authority under Section 211 of the Clean Air Act to set the overall renewable fuel blending requirement for 2014 at 14.80 billion gallons. That would be less than required by the Energy Independence and Security Act.

Reid Says Action on Climate Needed: ‘Future of Our Planet Is at Stake’Environmental damage from climate change is evident, and more action is needed to address it, Senate Majority Leader Reid tells the National Clean Energy Summit in Las Vegas, although he does not offer a specific legislative proposal. “The very future of our planet is at stake, and that’s why we have to do more and do it quickly,” Reid says. More » ... President Obama’s plan to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from power plants sends a signal to business that the United States is prioritizing clean energy programs, former EPA Administrator Jackson says.

GREENWIRE

CLIMATE: Fresh barbs fly as old foes square off on ‘day of action’ Rep. Dana Rohrabacher’s labeling of climate change as a “fraud” has made the California Republican a prime target for environmental and advocacy groups planning to hold rallies today at the district offices of lawmakers who question climate science. During an address to the Newport Mesa Tea Party Patriots on Thursday, the 13-term congressman -- a senior member of the Science, Space and Technology Committee -- questioned the notion that global warming is contributing to wildfires. “Just so you’ll know, global warming is a total fraud,” Rohrabacher said. “What you’ve got is you’ve got liberals who get elected at the local level want the state government to do the work and let them make the decisions. Then, at the state level, they want the federal government to do it. And at the federal government, they want to create global government to control all of our lives. That’s what the game plan is. It’s step by step by step, more and bigger control over our lives by higher levels of government. And global warming is simply that strategy in spades.” Rohrabacher also told the audience that he regretted endorsing former California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) after learning more about his stance on climate change.

COAL ASH: Groups intervene in N.C. lawsuits against Duke Two courts in North Carolina at the center of an enforcement debate over power plant waste disposal have agreed to allow environmentalists to intervene in ongoing litigation. Wake and Mecklenburg county superior courts in North Carolina have agreed to allow clients of the Southern Environmental Law Center, including the Sierra Club, to intervene in state lawsuits against Duke Energy Corp. over allegations of coal ash pollution from dumps near Asheville and Charlotte. Last month Duke agreed to pay a little more than \$99,000 in fines and launch additional monitoring as part of a proposed settlement agreement with the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (*Greenwire*, July 16). Regulators said seeps from ash slurry ponds associated with Duke plants were polluting the French Broad River and Mountain Island Lake, an important source of drinking water. Even though they agree on some points, environmental advocates say the proposed settlement doesn’t do enough to force Duke into cleaning up coal ash pollution.

Oil Industry Asks U.S. EPA to Limit 2014 Renewable Quotas The American Petroleum Institute asked the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to reduce requirements in 2014 for the use of renewable fuels, citing limits on refiners to blend in greater volumes of ethanol. The filing is the first by the Washington-based trade group, which represents companies such as Exxon Mobil Corp. (XOM) that produce and refine oil, and follows pressure to revise the program from lawmakers, corn consumers and anti-hunger advocates. While the EPA said last week it would cut the mandate for ethanol next year, it didn’t specify what the reductions would be or when they would be announced. “EPA is sending the right signal for next year, but we need the certainty now,” Bob Greco, director of API’s downstream group, said in an interview. “What we need to do is hold EPA’s feet to the fire.” Under the Renewable Fuel Standard, passed by Congress in 2007, refiners such as Exxon Mobil

must use a certain amount of renewable fuels each year, with their contribution determined by their share of the fuel market. The EPA and renewable-fuel producers argue it both spurs production of domestic fuels and cuts greenhouse-gas emissions.

BLOOMBERG NEWS SERVICE

Pennsylvania Residents Ask EPA to Reopen Fracking Probe Pennsylvania residents petitioned the Environmental Protection Agency to reopen an investigation into water quality in Dimock, after publication of an internal agency analysis that linked gas drilling to methane leaks. Ray Kemble, who lives in the town, and Craig Stevens, who lives nearby, today delivered a petition they said was signed by 60,000 people to EPA employees in Washington. They carried a gallon of brown water they said came from a well used by Kemble. "Even though I don't like to call the federal government in, you guys are our last hope," Stevens told EPA staffers outside the agency's headquarters. "We need you to tell the truth about fracking." Dimock, the northeast Pennsylvania town featured in the film "Gasland," has become a symbol for opponents questioning the safety of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, in which water, sand and chemicals are shot underground to free gas trapped in shale deep underground. In 2010, state regulators said drilling by Cabot Oil & Gas Corp. near Dimock had contaminated local wells, a finding disputed by the company. The subsequent EPA investigation, concluded last year, found the water posed no health risks to town residents. In late July, environmentalists uncovered an unreleased power-point presentation by an EPA employee that said fracking caused methane to leak into drinking-water aquifers. The EPA said the findings in the presentation were preliminary and more study is needed. Cabot said water-well issues are the result of natural gas migration, not its drilling or fracking. Following publication of the internal report, the critics of the gas-production technique say the EPA needs to return to Dimock and reopen its probe into what has happened there. "We will review the petition," Alisha Johnson, an agency spokeswoman who met with Kemble and Stevens, said in an e-mail. Gas production in Pennsylvania surged in the past few years as companies expanded use of fracking. Drillers are finding natural gas in the Marcellus Shale, which is about 5,000 feet under Pennsylvania and separated by thick rock layers from the water aquifers, which are at most a few hundred feet beneath the surface.

NEW YORK TIMES

Advertising: Clearing the Air on Diesel's Dismal Reputation BMW of North America is revving up its diesel engines again, starting an ambitious effort to encourage car buyers to consider six new diesel-power models for 2014. In Europe, diesel is a mainstay, but not so in this country, where unpleasant experiences in the 1970s and 1980s led a generation or two to regard diesel as if it were a synonym for "Edsel" and remain uninterested in subsequent diesel engines that were cleaner, quieter and more fuel efficient. BMW of North America would like to change that, in large part because as an auto company with a German parent, Bayerische Motoren Werke, it already has access to diesel technology. The ability to further amortize the development costs of those engines by changing North American minds about diesel must appeal mightily to the accountants in Munich. "We have authenticity and credibility when it comes to diesel," said Dan Creed, vice president for marketing at BMW of North America in Woodcliff Lake, N.J., adding, "You go to Europe, we have markets where 80 percent of what we sell has diesel engines." "I'm 46 years of age, and I remember the stigma of diesel growing up," Mr. Creed said, so an advertising campaign, which gets under way this week, will seek to dispel the negative perceptions among "those who still hang on to them."

NRDC BLOG

Interior Secretary Visits Fracking Fields in North Dakota, But Many Questions Remain Brenda and Richard Jorgenson have farmed in the White Earth Valley of North Dakota for more than 30 years. They built a home in the valley's sloping hillsides and planted crops around its native prairie grasses. They have weathered the rugged conditions of the Northern Plains because they love working the land, but now their way of life is threatened by a powerful new force: the Bakken oil boom. A frack pad sits roughly 800 feet from the Jorgenson home, a pipeline is being dug through their ranchland, and a waste disposal facility is planned nearby. The Jorgensons and many neighbors oppose the projects, but energy companies come armed with leases, lawsuits, and threats of eminent domain. Local residents have little recourse. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell visited North Dakota last week. She toured the oil patch and heard Governor Dallymple's request to "streamline" the permitting process for fracking on federal lands. I hope she also met with residents like the Jorgensons who are living on the frontlines of the fracking explosion—the ones who know that fracking has been linked to air pollution, water contamination and reduced property values in communities across the country. These families have a stake in North Dakota's past and its future, but their concerns aren't being addressed, and now scarred and contaminated landscapes are stretching across the state's wide horizons. The oil companies eventually move on, but residents are left to cope with the aftermath.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Coal-Burning Shortens Lives in China, New Study Shows Life expectancy in northern China was 5.5 years shorter than in southern China in the 1990s, and a health risk disparity lingers today, a difference almost entirely due to heart and lung disease related to air pollution from the burning of coal, a new study shows. The research, published Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), not only adds to the large body of evidence on the risks of small particle pollution, it provides the most precise measure yet of the health impact of smoke from combustion. Drawing on what they said was the most comprehensive data set ever compiled in the developing world, the researchers aimed to provide a yardstick that public policymakers can use as they consider the implications of decisions now being made on energy. The findings come at a time when coal is on track to surpass oil as the world's top energy source and 2.8 billion people rely on wood, crop waste, dung, and other biomass to cook and heat their homes. (See related: "Five Surprising Facts About Energy Poverty.") "We can now say with more confidence that long-run exposure to pollution, especially particulates, has dramatic consequences for life expectancy," said Michael Greenstone, economics professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who collaborated with researchers in China and Israel. "To be able to say with some precision what the health costs are, and what the loss of life expectancy is, puts a finer point on the importance of finding policies that balance growth with environmental quality."